

THE
ANTI-INFIDEL
AND
Christian's Magazine.

"It is a duty we owe to God, as the fountain and author of all truth, who is Truth itself, and it is a duty also we owe ourselves, if we deal candidly and sincerely with our own souls, to have our minds constantly disposed to entertain and receive truth wheresoever we meet with it, or under whatever appearance."—*Locke.*

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RELIGION AND REASON.

THE enemies of Christianity have been very laborious in their attempts to demonstrate, that between Religion and Reason a repulsive barrier is interposed; that their principles are hostile; and that they mutually tend to each others destruction. Religion, it is said, requires credence without proof, and Reason an attestation which Religion cannot supply. It may be observed, that most infidel objections appeal to the vanity or passions of men, and expect success from the flattering perfections and sufficiency which they ascribe to the human intellect. Hence many are deluded into the belief, that Religion demands the sacrifice of rationality, and that he who would retain Reason must reject Revelation. But, like other objections, this is founded on the most baseless and infirm assumption, and in defiance of facts too obvious to be misunderstood or unknown.

This will be evident if we examine the principles which Infidels endeavour to place in conflicting opposition. Reason is that faculty by which propositions are examined and conclusions deduced; and its evidences include that which may be

demonstrated, or that which may be inferred from the preponderance of probability. If we examine those objects upon which Reason commonly operates, they will be found to include, in their different modes, purposes, or modifications, something which refers to existence and happiness; or, in other words, that Reason proposes, through the media of certain processes, either internal or extraneous, to make enjoyment the end and possession of present being. Reason, as displayed in the discoveries of science, always proposes the amelioration or embellishment of life. Its comparisons and inquiries are connected with some practical benefit in moral or physical affairs. The terrors of lightning have been abated by the knowledge of electricity; science has restrained the destructiveness of the subterranean fire-damp; medicine has discovered remedies for natural disease; and the fine arts have supplied numerous objects of artificial beauty. It is hence obvious what are the purposes of Reason. In its various applications, the enjoyment of conscious existence is the end proposed; and whether it operates in supplying physical exigence, or the more refined demands of rational nature, its general design is the same: it directs

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to the acquisition of good, and the escape from evil. But to effect this temporal purpose, knowledge is evidently required, for ends cannot be accomplished without means, nor good be effected and evil be removed without their respective character and tendencies be known. That knowledge is the material through which reason operates, is hence illustrated.

If such be the general character and province of Reason; if its purpose be the enlargement of human happiness, and the just guidance of human conduct—it cannot be opposed to that which designs similar but more comprehensive results. Difference of means with similarity of purpose cannot demonstrate an essential contrariety of principle. He that was walking would not think his object frustrated by ascending a carriage which conveyed him with increased velocity to his previous destination. Now the question is, are the principles and objects of Revelation opposed to those of Reason,—are they essentially different, and mutually destructive? We have already described the pursuits and dictates of Reason, comparatively powerless and imperfect as they must ever be acknowledged. If, therefore, there be a resemblance between the proposition of Revelation and Reason; if Reason suggest that which Revelation supplies; if Reason conjecture what Revelation demonstrates, and the latter illuminate that which the imperfections of the former left uncertain and obscure,—nothing can appear more superficial and ignorant than the infidel allegation that Religion is opposed to Reason. If the extension of knowledge mean its extinction; if Reason be destroyed by the amplification of its limited views, and moral hypothesis be superior to certain demonstration, then will we yield the palm of wisdom to those whose dogma we now investigate and condemn.

What, then, let us inquire, does Revelation propose. Its grand and

professed object is to attest immortality, and teach the means by which happiness may be added to everlasting duration. This is a summary but comprehensive statement of the leading proposition and object of Christianity. Now we have before remarked, that the obvious province of Reason, properly applied, is to acquire and secure the means of happiness; and we here find that a similar, though enlarged and exalted province, is assumed by Revelation, which extends the boundary of man's existence to a future state, and offers the demonstrated means of rendering it happy. What is there so different in these respective principles, except that the transcendent, imperfect, and unattainable objects of one are rendered of a permanent and certain character by the other? What Reason would hope, Revelation would realize; and what Reason would lament as defective and impure, Revelation would elevate to excellence and purity. If Reason deduce, and experience attest, that certain bad inclinations and conduct entail temporary misery and physical disease, or that virtue will tend to produce comfort and health; and if Revelation, extending the consequences of moral action, assert that those who have done good shall come forth to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation, where is the opposing variation of principle? Nothing, opposed, even to the narrow limitation of human experience, is propounded in the fundamental principle of Christianity. The limited assurance of Reason, and the comprehensive declaration of Revelation, which announces remote effects concealed from the feeble vision of the former power, are quite identical in the character of their principle. In this respect, therefore, Religion and Reason corroborate each other, and if the authority of the one be admitted, the other cannot be consistently denied. The practical effects of Christianity are those which

Reason imperfectly endeavoured to accomplish; and surely that which inspires or invigorates a worthy motive by the influence of a superior object, cannot be deemed hostile to the reason whose weakness it would thus assist, and whose purpose it would accelerate and obtain.

If, however, it be replied, that,—through the compatibility between the practical dictates of Revelation Reason cannot be denied, immortality is contrary to Reason,—Reason is opposed to the assumption of eternal duration,—we answer that the premise of this proposition is altogether arbitrary and capricious. If the existence of another world is not attested by the ordinary evidence of sense or common experience, it is not contrary to Reason; that is, Reason does not *know* the contrary of what Revelation asserts; and the matter is to be regarded as one beyond the reach of unaided reason, and not as contradicting a negative demonstration. The fact of a man not having visited Birmingham, would not prove that there was no such town or no people in it; but every one would accredit the existence of such a place on the testimony of others. By the declarations of Christianity, the truth of which is multitudinously attested, that world does exist, and offers the strongest inducement to virtue here, and most enlivening assurances of happiness hereafter. If it be said, that the evidences of the authenticity of revealed Religion being supernatural, are opposed to Reason, we ask whether a Revelation God must not necessarily be supernatural, or beyond that which unassisted Reason or nature would be able to disclose; and whether an extraordinary communication should not be attested by extraordinary evidence? If Revelation be supernatural, a corresponding evidence is in the highest degree compatible with Reason; and the adduction of such evidence for such proof, would be authenticated and declared by the effects it would produce;

and the existing effects would demonstrate the power of their cause. Let these criteria be applied to the original propagation of Christianity, and its truth must be apparent and indubitable.

Where, then, is the alleged barrier between Religion and Reason? Is Christianity unreasonable because it insists on the necessity of a purification from evil—because it enforces virtue and condemns vice—because it inspires holy resolutions by the exalted nature of the objects which it displays, or awes wickedness by disclosing the penalty it must incur—or because it informs man of a more elevated sphere of existence and enjoyment which obedience to God and faith in the divine promises shall enable him to secure? Let Reason make the most acute inquiry or form the most exalted conception, and compare her results with Christianity, and in not one point will Religion be found incompatible with the most rigid demands of the judgment. If purity of doctrine, multiplied historical evidence, the excitement of consolatory hope, and the solution of a thousand difficulties, otherwise inexplicable, be proofs of compatibility of Revelation Reason, then ought Infidels to blush at the contrary assertion which they so frequently reiterate; and if they persist in the attempt to subvert the credibility of revealed Religion, let them supply a more lucid knowledge and consoling assurance than those which they would falsify and deride.

MEMOIR OF SIR ISAAC NEWTON.

[Continued from p. 326.]

THE appointment of Newton to the Lucasian chair seems to have been coeval with his grandest discoveries. The first of these, of which the date is well authenticated, is that of the different refrangibility of the rays of light, which he established in 1666. The germ of the doctrine of universal

gravitation seems to have presented to him in the same year, or at least in 1667. It was in the former year, as he informs us, that he "procured a triangular glass prism to try there-with the celebrated phenomena of colours." About this period he was also engaged in grinding hyperbolic lenses, with a view to the improvement of refracting telescopes, but he abandoned this attempt, and at length resolved to endeavour to construct reflecting telescopes. Philosophers of the highest genius were directing their minds to the subject of light, and the improvement of these instruments. James Gregory, of Aberdeen, had invented his reflecting telescope; Descartes had explained the theory of the common refracting one; and Huggens had not only executed the magnificent instruments by which he discovered the ring and the satellites of Saturn, but had begun those splendid researches respecting the nature of light, and the phenomena of double refraction which have led his successors to such brilliant discoveries. Newton, therefore, arose when the science of light was ready for some great accession, and at the precise time when he was required to propagate the impulse which it had received from his illustrious predecessors. A general ignorance prevailed on the subject, and it was supposed that light of every colour was equally refracted; and though the exhibition of colours had been often made previous to the time of Newton, yet no philosopher seems to have attempted to analyse the phenomena. Our limits prevent us from detailing the mode and progress of his experiments, but they at length carried to the grand conclusion, "that light was not homogeneous, but consisted of rays, some of which were more refrangible than others."

Such was the progress of Newton's optical discoveries, when he was forced to quit Cambridge in 1666, by the plague which then desolated England, and more than two years

elapsed before he proceeded any farther. In 1668 he resumed this inquiry, and constructed his reflecting telescope, by the new principle of which he intended to increase the power and diminish the size of the instruments; and he expressed his conviction that a six-feet telescope might be made after his method, which would perform as well as a sixty or a hundred-feet telescope, made in the common way.* The success of this first experiment inspired Newton with fresh zeal, and with all the ardour of youth he applied himself to the laborious operation of executing another reflecting telescope with his own hands. This instrument was better than the first. His invention obtaining publicity, Newton was requested to send his instrument to the Royal Society, and from this period his name began to acquire that celebrity by which it has been so peculiarly distinguished.

In December, 1671, Newton was proposed by Dr. Lethward, Bishop of Sarum, as a Fellow of the Royal Society, and his election took place in the following month. Shortly afterwards he communicated to the above scientific body, his discoveries respecting colours. The following ingenious and interesting experiment illustrated that the rays of white light are composed of a variety of colours.

It consisted in attempting to compound a white by mixing the coloured powders used by painters. He was aware that such colours, from their very nature, could not compose a pure white; but even this imperfection in the experiment he removed by an ingenious device. He accordingly mixed one part of *red lead*, four parts of *blue bise*, and a proper proportion of *orpiment* and *verdigreuse*. This mixture was *dun* like wood newly cut, or like the human skin. He now took one-third of the mixture and rubbed

* A somewhat similar attempt has been made, by Mr. William Proctor, an ingenious optician of Sheffield, in his "Parabated Acromatio."—Ed. A. L.

it thickly on the floor of his room, where the sun shone upon it through the opened casement; and beside it, in the shadow, he laid a piece of white paper of the same size. "Then going from them to the distance of twelve or eighteen feet, so that he could not discern the unevenness of the surface of the powder, nor the little shadows let fall from the gritty particles thereof; the powder appeared intensely white, so as to transcend even the paper itself in whiteness." By adjusting the relative illumination of the powders and the paper, he was able to make them both appear of the very same degree of whiteness. "For," says he, "when I was trying this, a friend coming to visit me, I stopped him at the door, and before I told him what the colours were, or what I was doing, I asked him which of the two whites were the best, and wherein they differed? And after he had at that distance viewed them well, he answered, that they were both good whites, and that he could not say which was best, nor wherein their colours differed." Hence Newton inferred that perfect whiteness may be compounded of different colours.

No sooner were these discoveries given to the world than they were opposed with a degree of virulence and ignorance which have seldom been combined in scientific controversy. Unfortunately for Newton, the Royal Society contained few individuals of pre-eminent talent, capable of appreciating the truth of his discoveries, and of protecting him against the shafts of his envious and ignorant assailants. This eminent body, while they held his labours in the highest esteem, were still of opinion that his discoveries were fair subjects of discussion, and their Secretary accordingly communicated to him all the papers which were written in opposition to his views. He was assailed by many eminent men; but stimulated to further research, he established his own theories and refuted objections which were urged by his ad-

versaries. The influence of these controversies on the mind of Newton seems to have been highly exciting. Even the satisfaction of humbling all his antagonists, he did not feel as a sufficient compensation for the disturbance of his tranquillity. "I intend," says he, "to be no farther solicitous about matters of philosophy. And therefore I hope you will not take it ill if you find me never doing any thing more in that kind; or rather that you will favour me in my determination, by preventing, so far as you can conveniently, any objections or other philosophical letters that may concern me." In a subsequent letter in 1675, he says, "I had some thoughts of writing a further discourse about colours, to be read at one of your assemblies; but find it yet against the grain to put pen to paper any more on that subject;" and in a letter to Leibnitz, dated December the 9th, 1675, he observes, "I was so persecuted with discussions arising from the publication of my theory of light, that I blamed my own imprudence for parting with so substantial a blessing as my quiet to run after a shadow." Passing over some intervening periods and experiments, we must now introduce the reader to that process of inquiry which led to the establishment of the doctrine of gravity and the publication of the "Principia."

In the year 1666, when the plague had driven Newton from Cambridge, he was sitting alone in the garden at Woolsthorpe, and reflecting on the nature of gravity, that remarkable power which causes all bodies to descend towards the centre of the earth. As this power is not found to suffer any sensible diminution at the greatest distance from the earth's centre to which we can reach, being as powerful at the tops of the highest mountains as at the bottom of the deepest mines, he conceived it highly probable, that it must extend much farther than was usually supposed.

No sooner had this happy conjec-

ture occurred to his mind, than he considered what would be the effect of its extending as far as the moon. That her motion must be influenced by such a power, he did not for a moment doubt; and a little reflection convinced him that it might be sufficient for retaining that luminary in her orbit round the earth. Though the force of gravity suffers no sensible diminution at those small distances from the earth's centre at which we can place ourselves, yet he thought it very possible, that at the distance of the moon, it might differ much in strength from what is on the earth. In order to form some estimate of the degree of its diminution, he considered, that if the moon be retained in her orbit by the force of gravity, the primary planets must also be carried round the sun by the same power.

The great work which hence originated, entitled *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica*, was presented to the Royal Society in 1686. We shall endeavour to convey to the reader some idea of its contents, and of the brilliant discoveries which it disseminated over Europe.

The *Principia* consists of three books. The first and second, which occupy three-fourths of the work, are entitled, *On the Motion of Bodies*; and the third bears the title, *On the System of the World*. The two first books contain the mathematical Principles of Philosophy, namely, the laws and conditions of motions and forces; and they are illustrated with several philosophical scholia which treat of some of the most general and best established points in philosophy, such as the density and resistance of bodies, spaces void of matter, and the motion of sound and light. The object of the third book is to deduce from these principles the constitution of the system of the world; and this book has been drawn up in as popular a style as possible, in order that it may be generally read.

The great discovery which characterizes the *Principia* is that of the principle of universal gravitation, as deduced from the motion of the moon, and from the three great facts or laws discovered by Kepler. This principle is, that every particle of matter is attracted by, or gravitates to, every other particle of matter, with a force inversely proportional to the squares of their distances.

By the application of the principle of gravity was Newton enabled to explain the cause of the tides of the ocean, as well as the motion and sustentation of the heavenly bodies. Our limits will not allow us to go into the details, nor would an elaborate investigation be compatible with the character of our Work. But such is a brief view of the leading discoveries which the *Principia* first announced to the world. The grandeur of the subjects of which it treats, the beautiful simplicity of the system which it unfolds, the clear and concise reasoning by which that system is explained, and the irresistible evidence by which it is supported, might have insured it the warmest admiration of contemporary mathematicians, and the most welcome reception in all the schools of philosophy throughout Europe. This, however, is not the way in which great truths are generally received. But after experiencing that resistance which truth so generally receives from the dulness of ignorance or the force of prejudice, opposition was rapidly overpowered, and long before his death Newton enjoyed the satisfaction of seeing his philosophy triumphant in his native country.

Here, for a time, we must suspend the memoir. We have seen Sir Isaac Newton's discoveries in the doctrines of colours and gravity, and in our next we shall have to contemplate him in a theological character. We must now make a statement which ought to have appeared in our last. The substance of this memoir is derived from

Dr. Brewster's recently published "Life" of the eminent philosopher to which these pages refer.

[To be continued.]

THE POWER OF DELUSION.

It is remarked by Johnson, that of the numerous uncertainties of human life, none is so dreadful as the uncertain continuance of reason. This observation referred to the deluded astronomer in *Rasselas*, who by the constant indulgence of an excursive imagination, at length believed that he was in a situation which fancy had represented, as possible, and that to him was entrusted the direction of the sun and the distribution of the rain. The increase and impetuosity of imagination which this character was intended to describe, have been very recently illustrated, and in a place where the pastoral frown and reprehension ought at once to have repressed the display of such rhapsodical extravagance. Among the congregation under the care of the Rev. E. Irving, pretensions to a supernatural gift of "tongues" has been made; and, on Sunday week, during the morning service, a female exhibited the alleged miraculous power, which, it was said, the Holy Spirit had communicated. That, by indulging unfounded expectations, mistaking the Scriptures, and being ignorant of the delusion to which the mind is liable, some weak and uninformed person might have believed such a visionary communication, is very possible; but we certainly should have deemed it incredible that Mr. Irving would be the first patron of manifest delusion. The soundness of his own judgment is certainly rendered suspicious by his remarkable conduct on the occasion to which we refer.

It cannot be alleged that, because in circumstances which required the miraculous interposition of divine power, which was exhibited and attested, the same power is to be put forth

when it is unnecessary and useless, and tends rather to degrade than exalt our notions of the wisdom and majesty of God. Dismissing the antecedent abstract power of the Supreme Being to interrupt the ordinary course of nature, we find that the miracles recorded in the Bible are connected with circumstances which render them credible. If mankind had become so immersed in darkness, that elevation to a perception of truth could be effected only by the intervention of a "sign," or direct appeal to their senses; if men, at the introduction of Christianity, could have their judgments guided and convinced only by a visible display of supernatural power, we find the end of such magnitude as to render the introduction of extraordinary means highly benevolent and credible. We behold in such miracles a merciful accommodation of the power and mercy of God to the degraded and melancholy state of his creatures. Their necessities excited an adapted method of assurance and instruction, which none but an incarnate Jehovah could have exercised. In the gift of tongues at the day of Pentecost, the miracle was connected with *utility*, and the propagation of the Gospel required such an exertion of the divine power.

But what could a member of Mr. Irving's church plead as a reason for such a miraculous visitation? Almost every nation of the earth has access to the Word of God in their vernacular tongue; and missionaries find no great difficulty in acquiring the knowledge of foreign languages required to instruct the people of heathen countries. Of what commensurate utility, then, could such a miracle be? The course of Providence is not deviating and full of anomalies. It has afforded a sufficient power of evidence to attest the different dispensations which have been introduced; and when once established by miraculous intervention, their subsequent progress has been left to the

ordinary providence of God operating through the medium of men.

Unrestrained fancy, superstition too powerful for religion to correct, or the impulse of specious self-conceit, stimulated by those spirits whom the apostle says should be "tried" to prevent their deception, is the cause which produced the extraordinary pretension which Mr. Irving has believed and encouraged. Without any decided evidence, without any visible utility, is the said miracle accredited by a man who ought to know better than sanction such demonstrable delusion. If articulating sounds which belong to no existing language, is to be taken as the sign of a miraculous influence, we see no reason why every enthusiast may not set up the claim, and urge a chaotic jargon as authenticating his reception of the peculiar favours of the Almighty. Can a Christian minister tolerate such impiety, or if he does, can he be fit to hold an office where his indiscretion may bring religion into contempt? Christianity itself makes no appeal to credulity; it demonstrates what it asserts by a variety of evidence. But Mr. Irving and some of his people receive mere sounds, which cannot be combined into any sort of meaning but that which the caprice of the utterer chooses to impose, as the authenticating tests of supernatural communications. Derangement exists in a variety of modes; and this is one of them. Much indeed do we regret that Mr. Irving's infirmity should have destroyed the power of usefulness which he might otherwise have exercised, and that it should have been induced or encouraged by the peculiar eccentricities which were once perhaps affected, but which, we fear, are now the natural result of that aberration to which they legitimately belong. We trust that his better sense will return, and that acknowledged power will be applied to extend piety and repress delusion.

THE PULPIT OBSERVER.

THE REV. J. BURNET,

At Tonbridge Chapel, Somers' Town.

THE fourth Lecture of the Christian Instruction Society was delivered on Tuesday evening, by the Rev. J. Burnet. The subject was the Immortality of the Soul, and the text from Ecclesiastes xii. 7 "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit return unto God who gave it."

In looking back on the history of the world as to the state of truth and falsehood, we may distinguish distinct periods into which it may be divided. The period immediately preceding the deluge was distinguished by Infidelity; and there is no evidence that there then existed any belief in the Deity, or in the immortality of the soul. The practical issue of this was, that the earth was filled with violence and vice. Turning to the succeeding period after the deluge, we find it distinguished by the practice of idolatry. A feeling somewhat akin to worship was engendered; and hence we find that idolatry soon extended through the earth, and produced the grossest corruptions and the most unclean practices. We next come to the period when the Gospel was introduced, which was distinguished by superstition. But Christianity was itself soon obscured and impeded in its diffusion by superstition; and instead of being glorified by its moral energy, and urged by the authority of the purest and simplest morality, its substance vanished and scarcely a shadow remained; and the gorgeous trappings with which human artifice or infirmity invested it, produced gloomy or fantastic superstitions. From this we may pass to another period in which we may include the present. The revival of letters cast a benign influence over the world; but the scattered rays of truth, operating through the expanding energies of the human mind, convulsed the strong holds of superstition, and at length the reformation was effected. Since that period truth has been winning triumphs in every way. It has gained mighty conquests in science, in politics, and in morals, and has begun to act on religion and purify it from the superstitions which still remain.

From this mighty impulse, many in the present period are disposed to discard those things which ought to be retained. But it is surely not right to deny truth because of the obscurations which have been thrown around it. But my object in thus presenting the character of the preceding periods as an elementary topic, is to trace the influence of the first infidelity in its subsequent ramifications. I now propose to remove some of the obscurations which are attached to the immortality of the soul.

The text necessarily makes a distinction between the mortal and the immortal part of man. "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit return unto God who gave it." Here it is asserted that the spirit will outlive the revolutions of matter. If some ask what evidence can be given of the truth of this doctrine, we deny the right of the sceptic to require it; for if the truth of the Word of God is established, that is sufficient.

But, first, we infer that the soul is immortal because it is beyond the reach of the elements of destruction. We can apply numerous instruments to the destruction of the body. Poisons may be extracted from the vegetable kingdom and the mineral kingdom, and these, with other powers, may be applied to the destruction of the body: but not one can touch the spirit of man. We are not acquainted with one essence in nature which can come in contact with the spirit. We may conceive matter in contact against matter, world against world, planet against planet, and system against system; and thus carry idea forward to the ruin of a universe. But amidst such a tremendous convulsion of the elements the soul would survive, for the convulsions of a universe could not accomplish its ruin.

When we look to the attributes of matter, we admire the beauty of its combinations and the wisdom by which its motions are directed; but we cannot observe anything which indicates the power of eternal duration. Fire will consume the hardest bodies; concussion will rend the solid rocks; and other forces will neutralize or destroy each other. But from such modes of destruction or decay of matter, let us pass on to consider the facts which relate to the mind. We find

the elements of the soul constantly starting into enlarged existence and multiplied vigour. Behold the faculty of understanding, and the affections, which communicate feeling and energy to the other more ponderous intellectual powers, and then ask, What is there in these to prove that the spirit is only mortal?

We also infer the immortality of the soul from the attainment at which the human mind has arrived. If we observe the irrational world, we find an unvarying sameness of character in the individuals of each species. Animals attain only a certain eminence of instinct, beyond which their nature does not carry them. Here they stand fast. Although they may be trained to certain offices of use or amusement, they do not transmit what they have acquired to their succeeding generation. A certain restricted boundary is given to their powers, and they are incapable of indefinite attainments: and hence we infer that they are not immortal. But observe the difference, or rather the extraordinary contrast, between the character of the brute and the human mind. The intellect of man seems capable of indefinite attainment and eternal expansion. There is no boundary to his accumulating knowledge; it is not limited to the acquisition of a single age, but the whole mass of intelligence is conveyed from one generation to another, and each makes a successive addition to the previous amount. Century after century has been going on in attainment, till at length the discoveries of science have been applied to every species of lofty improvement which marks the career of ages, and still no one spirit can receive the intelligence of a single community, or command strength to wield such a mighty mass of knowledge.

We infer that the mind is immortal from the short period allowed for the development of its powers. If with all his faculties man were not immortal, a larger portion of time would be allowed for their exercise and enjoyment. If He who gave such faculties, capable of such vast improvement and endless expansion, has given only an insufficient period for their existence and development, is it not a tremendous anomaly which reason is unable to explain? To suppose that God has allotted a proportionate period to mature

the other portions of his creation which exhibit his wisdom; to suppose that animals are allowed a sufficient time to develop their faculties, and rise to the limited perfection of their being, and then that man whose faculties and wisdom are comparatively gigantic, should live for a small and insufficient moment, and then sink for ever in shades of extinction, is a great and revolting absurdity; and sooner than believe it, I would deny the demonstrations of mathematics, and renounce the power of reason! Man, it may be said, has the power to develop his faculties at the allotted period of existence. Threescore years and ten are said to be the common boundary of life, or it may be extended to fourscore. Now why should such mighty powers be restricted in their enjoyment to fourscore years? Why not allow them a period sufficient for maturity and perfection, like that awarded to the animal creation, which live till all their faculties are developed? This is not the case with man. The greatest extent of his existence is but a span; and instead of fourscore years, thirty only are allowed for an average generation. What time then has an individual for the real development of his faculties? In infancy, he is beneath the animals in the power of activity and enjoyment; the immaturity of youth must also be deducted; and then, when he has reached manhood, his sun of existence just touches the meridian, and begins to set, and he rapidly descends to the decrepitude of age. His existence here at the uttermost is but a span; but how much less is it when thus shortened by infancy at the beginning, and, perhaps, by second infancy before its end! Was it alone for this brief noonday that man was designed? Do animals attain the perfection of their nature, while man, gifted with noble powers and exalted sympathies, is selected to live for a contracted and insufficient period, and then lay down his faculties for ever! The mind that could believe this must be destitute of feeling, or unable to investigate evidence. Who then can believe the spirit to be mortal when contrasting man with the animals!

But we would infer the immortality of the soul from the circumstance that it has a number of faculties by which it is adapted for another world. This reconciles

the anomalies and contradiction which are concomitant with the converse conclusion; for we then behold the spirit not consigned to the gloom of an approaching extinction, but destined to blaze in all the glories of immortality. Yes! grant that the spirit of man shall appear before his Creator; clothe him with immortality at his entrance into being; and I then can discover a system which discloses prospective glory, and why such vast capacities have been furnished to man, and why God has raised him so far above the brutes! I can then see why the spirit of man should lord it over creation. But take immortality away, and I am lost in contradiction and perplexity.

If, then, the immortality of the soul be established and admitted; if the present be only intended as a state of preparatory discipline; the commencement of an endless and progressive development of the human powers and sympathies--a mere preface to a subsequent and more exalted existence,--is it not strange that God should not communicate a knowledge of himself to man? You may tell me that he excites admiration in the works of nature, in which abound indication of his goodness and wisdom. But such considerations are uninfluential and insufficient. How far then does the Bible meet the necessities of man? Are its morals fitted for the purpose? Did sceptics ever find a flaw in the moral law of God as exhibited in Revelation? No! but many of them have held it up to general admiration. The love of God is inculcated as the fundamental ground of its morality; "thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength; this is the first and great commandment." And if we inquire what conduct is enjoined to our brethren, the same authority answers, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Man is not first to secure his own interest, and then love his neighbour, but to indulge a more enlarged and glowing principle of charity and benevolence; and thus first united in love to God, bring its principle down to the constant love of man. Is there any imperfection in this code of morality? or can scepticism question such exalted principles as these? Such principles are included in the moral scheme of Christianity, and intended to

prepare man to dwell with his fellow-immortals in happiness when this existence shall terminate, and every malignant passion shall cease.

After alluding to other features of Christianity, the preacher observed, that immortality thus argued out to its greatest extent, naturally induces man to rely on the mercy of God and the merits of the Saviour, and thus prepares him for happiness in that everlasting state which he now approached and must soon enter.

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BELoved brethren, in the 21st chapter of the Gospel according to Saint Matthew, and in the 18th and following verses, you will find these words, "Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered. And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever, and presently the fig tree withered away. And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away! Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, if ye have faith and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. And all things ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." Now if God, with hail smote the fig tree, and withered it to the ground, in consequence of this disappointment, in finding it barren, how much, beloved brethren, have we to be alarmed about ourselves, for by this parable we are taught that the Lord God Almighty, who has so bountifully bestowed upon us his richest gifts and blessings, will expect to receive from us in return the fruits of righteousness, of holiness, of meekness, and of humility: and great will be his disappointment if he findeth not those fruits. Oh! how much and how alarmingly to be feared will be his wrath. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire. Beloved, great is the manifestation of God in the parable in our text. In the first place, there is the miracle which the Lord Jesus mani-

fested to his disciples, and secondly, the power given to them to perform others in his name by faith.

Jesus resided at Bethany, a small village near Jerusalem, and although he entered Jerusalem in the morning, he returned at night to Bethany where he lodged. Now we find that he hungered as he entered the city, and seeing a fig tree covered with leaves, bedecked with the richest foliage, growing in all luxuriance, he came to it full of the pleasing expectation of finding fruit in abundance to satisfy his craving in a commensurate proportion to its bountiful appearance; how great then was his disappointment at finding no fruit—and his wrath is manifested in his malediction bestowed upon it. "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever." The Lord Jesus showed us not only by his example but by his precepts, that he was always solicitous of attending to the will of his heavenly Father rather than indulging his own, and thereby testifying to us that we who have taken up the cross and followed him, must do so in spirit and truth, and be not mere professors. We cannot deceive God, although, in our own blindness of heart, we may deceive ourselves. Be we cautious then, my brethren, and watchful, lest we forget and pass heedlessly by the rich promises which the Gospel of our Lord Jesus holds out for those who having received so much, bring forth fruit accordingly; but woe unto him who is barren:—unto him to whom much is given much is to be expected. Beloved brethren, God will expect from us that obedience and submission to his will which we are not only taught by the example of our Lord Jesus himself, but also by his precepts as laid down in his Gospels.

We perceive in the malediction of our Lord Jesus, "Let no fruit grow on the tree henceforward for ever," it passes a general sort of malediction upon those who have received, and from whom fruit was expected, that God would not spare them if they did not bring forth good fruit: turn, therefore, I beseech you, from the wickedness of your own hearts unto God—he your sins as scarlet, he can make them as snow—he is always anxious to receive you who come to him with faith and a contrite heart. Lose not a moment, for this is the accepted time. The Lord God

himself hath declared unto us that there is more joy in heaven for one sinner that repenteth, than the remaining ninety and nine who were just and need no repentance.

Jesus withered away the fig tree, and as the disciples saw it they marvelled, and inquired, How soon was the fig tree withered away; and you will find in the reply which he makes to his disciples, the promise of power to perform miracles: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, if ye have faith and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done."

The second part of this we find the special appointment. Brethren, I wish to make an honest use of the Word of God: I should have wished not to have chosen, but this has special reference to the parties addressed;—that they were to go to the different corners of the earth to preach the Gospel, to open the eyes of the blind, to strew before the unbelievers the golden treasures, the fulness and richness of the blessings promised to be found in the Gospels of Jesus, and pointing out the means of obtaining them—and, as at the time of the promulgation of the Gospel, the world was in a state of almost perfect darkness and wickedness, it became necessary that the Almighty should endow his disciples with power of performing miracles, in order to prove that they were the chosen of God, and that it was his mission they were performing, and not that of man. And, if they did not possess this miraculous power, the scepticism of the world was at that period so great, none would believe they possessed this power, and consequently we have a right to believe the Lord Jesus when he said he would always be with them, that they should by their own hands work miracles. When there was no promise there was nothing to expect: this good proceedeth from God, by his power and merciful Spirit, thereby encouraged by God. I say if you pray thus, and have faith, believing ye shall receive.

We believe the special appointment, that they were urged to ask in faith, and that whatsoever they did, they should receive. The signs and wonders which we are told to look for in the heavens,

were only intended for the first century and not for the nineteenth, for at that period Satan had dominion over the hearts of men, and God evidenced his love and forbearing mercy in not destroying them for their wickedness. At this period, the world was in darkness and full of scepticism; and, preferring darkness rather than light, it required miracles to be wrought in order to shew that the power of God was equal to all things, and that the world might be brought to a saving knowledge of God's Holy Word, and thereby awakened to their own sinfulness and the consequent danger they were in of incurring the vengeance of an offended God by loving darkness rather than light and following the dictates of their own hearts.

Jesus wrought miracles at his own will, and he also empowered his disciples to do so in his name, I regard as primarily appertaining to the Jewish church. Visit their temples, see all the splendour and costly materials with which they are enriched—then go into their market places—and who, seeing all this, would expect fruit. Why did the Lord Jesus smite the fig tree because of its barrenness. Titus Domitian believed that the people were living under the dominion of sin, and that they preferred darkness rather than light.—Oh! how often did Sodom and Gomorrah cry unto God.

This parable of the fig tree is referable principally to the Jewish Church as well as to every false professor of Christianity. When we come to examine ourselves and look for fruit, we shall, I am afraid, be woefully disappointed. I do not wish to attach any of this to you, my beloved brethren, but from what I have already said, you must indeed be blind if ye see not the necessity of faith and good works—that ye bring forth the fruits of holiness and of the spirit. God will not be satisfied with mere professions of faith in Christianity. Omission of any duty is offensive to God. Eli omitted to report the want of oil, and the Virgins' lamp went out. It will avail us nothing, my friends, to say that we are not as bad as other men: bear in mind the parable of the rich publican who smote his breast and thanked his God that he was not as other men were,—he did not commit this sin or that sin,—no, we must address ourselves to the Majesty of Heaven, the all-

wise and all-merciful God, with humility clothing our language, and with a contrite heart, with faith in our Lord Jesus; otherwise we do not possess the spirit of righteousness or holiness, which is the Spirit of God. Many of you have for years upon years come to this chapel as professors of Christianity, and have never as yet brought forth any fruit. Can we, then, recognize the Spirit of God working in us?—Are we enlisted under the banners of Christ? Do we not walk in the paths of unrighteousness, preferring darkness to light, setting at defiance the malediction of God, who smote the fig tree in consequence of its barrenness, and accursed it? Will he not in his wrath do so with us, who, having the light of Revelation and the Gospel before us, reject the only means of salvation? Oh, my beloved, do you turn unto God, forsake all your evil ways, and like Aaron's rod shall you bring forth fruit. Look to Him in whom all godliness dwells, and through whom alone we can be saved. He is always ready to receive us; if we approach Him with faith, He will not reject us, or cast us into outer darkness. May God, then, enable you to return to your closets, and ponder in your minds the words which you have this day heard, and that you may be enriched with that knowledge which passeth all understanding, and that ye may bring forth fruit accordingly. Amen.

REVIEW.

An Examination of Mr. Owen's Doctrines of Human Responsibility, and the Influence of Circumstances in the Formation of Character. London: Holdsworth and Ball.

It is declared by Revelation, that man is a being possessed of reason and sympathy, or will and understanding, and that he has a power to choose or reject as these faculties are influenced by their exercise on any proposition. Hence, by having the power to resist or modify the impressions he receives, and to determine the effect which they shall produce, he is supposed to be a responsible agent, whose moral comfort or wretchedness is under

his own control. It is further declared, by the same authority, that the acquisition of certain knowledge will strengthen and rectify his perceptions of good and evil, and thus that his understanding, as it is gradually expanded by intelligence, may direct, purify, and exalt the inclinations of the will, by exhibiting the fittest objects of rational desire. The determination of his character is represented as under the influence of motives, which truth may inspire, extinguish, or correct. Hence it is declared, that man may be "born again," and have his moral constitution changed and improved. It is, in short, affirmed that he may act in freedom according to the suggestions of rationality. That these positions are compatible with experience, and that Omniscience was not deceived in its estimation of the moral constitution of humanity, might be evinced by numberless arguments and illustrations.

But this doctrine, which excites man to self-knowledge and virtue, which would extend the progress towards perfection and felicity through the ages of eternity, is denied and ridiculed by Mr. Owen, who denounces responsibility, and oracularly declares, that, by extraneous agents which he cannot control, man's character is put into him without his consent, or against his choice, as fixtures are placed in an empty house. This dogma is the foundation of Mr. Owen's system; and as he is in the exclusive possession of the only metaphysical and social wisdom, of course any doctrine which opposes the profound arcana which he has discovered, must be false and injurious. Hence, his plans for human amelioration cannot be realized till opposing errors are removed, or, in plain terms, till he has succeeded in the destruction of Christianity. Then, out of the crumbling ruins of subverted religion, a paradise is to arise; and, by the sublimating influence of circumstances,—that is, by a befitting supply of sundry esculent commodities, seemly apparel, and well-aired dormitories,—the gregarious tribes of humanity are to be regenerated, and present an example which might inspire the envy of angels, did Mr. Owen's plan permit them to exist.

To expose the danger and fallacy of Mr. Owen's atheistic metaphysics, is the object of the very sensible and able pam-

phlet which has occasioned these remarks. The author first denudes Mr. Owen of the pretended originality of his "new views," by shewing that others have maintained a similar doctrine as to necessity, and that the Word of God itself contains passages by which that doctrine is apparently suggested or confirmed. It may here be incidentally remarked,—however acute and specious may be the arguments which have been advanced against free-agency, and however great may be the appearances by which necessity is sustained,—that mankind, from the earliest notices of their history, have been regarded and governed as responsible beings, which implies a supposed or acknowledged liberty of choice; and that upon no other principle could human society be regulated or made to cohere. It might, indeed, be said, from the uniformity with which this principle has in all ages been observed, that its truth and compatibility with the nature of things, has been universally perceived by intuition, that it is one of those innate impressions against which Locke so severely contends. That human responsibility exists, whether man be a necessary or a free agent, or whether his constitution include an intermixture of necessity and freedom, the author of the pamphlet thus demonstrates:—

"By the very frame and texture of our bodies and minds, we are subject to be actuated by pleasure and pain, joy and grief, hope and fear; and by the order and constitution of the objects and elements by which we are surrounded and penetrated, some one or other of these sensations and emotions is continually operating upon us. Nothing is more certain than that the experience of satisfaction or dissatisfaction, of happiness or misery, is, in a great measure, dependant upon the course of human action, one course being productive of satisfaction and happiness, and another course inflicting or entailing dissatisfaction and misery, immediate or remote. A child on eating a fruit which, though palatable, is unwholesome, does not anticipate the sickness which ensues from the gratification of his appetite. This being undeniable, how, we would ask, is it possible for us to ascertain those rules of life which insure well being, without availing ourselves of the experience acquired by others? The doctrine of necessity cannot exempt those who hold it from suffering grief and pain, as the fruits of their errors and vices."

After thus elucidating the position, that the individual may form his own character to happiness or misery, the author thus defends the sacred writers:—

"The threatenings of the Bible are neither more nor less than warnings or predictions of the inevitable consequences of vicious actions. And that which justly and reasonably warrants the use of the words responsible and accountable, when speaking of the conduct of agents, whether regarded as necessary or free, or partly necessary and partly free, is, that the individual, in his own proper person, is the sufferer. All the powers of earth cannot reverse this law. Such being the case, what can Mr. Owen adduce, to justify his condemnation of the language of Scripture when it declares, that it will be well with the righteous, and ill with the wicked; that what a man soweth, that he will also reap; and that our sins are sure to find us out? To any man whose understanding is not enveloped in the fog generated by the wretched sophistry of Mr. Owen's ratiocination, the case above stated will be as clear as an Italian sky at noon day."

The power which an individual can exercise to form or modify his own character is then illustrated in the case of Mr. Owen himself:—

"A favourite phrase of Mr. Owen is, that we 'have been trained to believe' so and so. From this style of address one might be led to conclude, that Mr. Owen himself has not been trained; but that, having been left from infancy to roam about the fields and highways, he picked up the quantum of knowledge which he possessed, up to the time of his arriving at what are commonly called 'the years of discretion.' But we believe, however, that he was trained pretty much after the fashion in which the generality of persons of the class from which he sprang were trained, when he was a child. Presuming that this was the case, how happens it that, in spite of this training, he has been able to emancipate himself from the erroneous notions which were instilled into his infant mind? But if he has thus shaken off early prejudices, why may not others have done the same?"

According to Mr. Owen, there are no antecedent propensities in man, but every passion, tendency, or appetite is created for him without the slightest inconvenience on the part of the man himself; and, of course he is not responsible. Mr. Owen thus states the arcanum:—

"And yet it is most evident that the individual has not the slightest control in all this; for, in fact, he possesses nothing of his own creation. There is not the shadow of a substance in which merit or demerit can be supposed to exist."

It is certainly a very agreeable reflection, that a man may be manufactured into a pickpocket, a murderer, or a liar, without having his consent asked, or any particular liking for such respectable avocations. There are many who have not the slightest taste for any of the above crafts, or their consequences; and yet should these poor creatures happen to come in contact with the circumstance whose calling it is to make pickpockets, murderers, or liars, away they are propelled to crime, disgrace, and the gallows. We have heard of slavery, and execrated despotism, but never did we hear of such tyranny and degradation as this doctrine involves! The author of the pamphlet thus replies to the above dogma:—

"The thing to be proved is not that man has no control over the circumstances by which he is surrounded—or, more correctly speaking, that they were not chosen or determined by himself, though in many cases this is the fact—but it is, that he has no power to examine the impressions which these external circumstances make upon his mind; no ability to compare them with a previously ascertained standard of truth; and no liberty to determine upon the course which he will himself pursue. This is the real question, and the only one for determination, and upon this Mr. Owen is silent, as far as argument is concerned. Could we find but a single exception to Mr. Owen's law of circumstances, in the formation of the human character, that alone would be sufficient to invalidate his reasoning and overturn his hypothesis. But we find hundreds and thousands, and those of the most striking description."

The extracts which we have given are conclusive against the position of Mr. Owen; and if that be fallacious, it cannot produce the proposed result. It is, however, inferred, that society might be so constructed that a perfect equality should prevail as the effect of a peculiar social constitution! But equality could never be confirmed as a natural result of artificial causes. It supposes that the members of a community shall possess,

individually, habits, tendencies, and volitions, identical in character and equal in power; that one huge sameness shall prevail among the multitudes by whom such a community is to be constituted. The slightest variety of moral character must produce difference of taste and action. If some wished to acquire, and others to expend, the distinction of those who possessed and those who did not possess wealth, would be introduced unless prevented by arbitrary means. If some wished to rule, and others submitted to be governed, a distinction of power would arise; and thus, however insignificant in its origin, inequality would be introduced, unless a moral identity of character were created and preserved. But what man, unfit for Bedlam, could entertain such an expectation? As well might it be said that all the particles composing the earth should be superficial, and constructed into one vast plane; that the centre should be at the circumference; that the globe could retain its shape if the atoms were dissipated by the action of centrifugal force; or that a man must cease to have extremities because they involve a difference in the altitude of certain portions of the matter by which his body is composed. But the supposition is too chimerical to need exposure to any one retaining the faculty of common sense.

Let it not, however, be thought that we advocate wretchedness as a necessary result of a predetermined or inevitable state of humanity. A greater equality in the distribution of that which is produced, is absolutely required. But society must be ameliorated from the moral force of the people themselves; and as they thus rise in character they will rise in circumstance; for, however, unwelcome it sound to those who anticipate the imaginary effect of dazzling theories, the people have few greater enemies than the disorderly habits in which they indulge. The Divine Author of Christianity, in a few words, taught all that the elaborate investigations of social science have vainly attempted to discover or effect on other principles: "First seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto you." Let the effects of this principle be extended universally; and then, from the very

change produced in the collective character of man, each would seek the good of his neighbour, private interests, collisions, and antipathies would be unknown, and the countless multitudes of the earth become as one affectionate and united family. Reverse the principle, as Mr. Owen proposes,—destroy the only true foundations of morality, and make character the passive result of circumstances, instead of circumstances being capable of being modified or altered by character, and failure and disappointment and misery must ensue.

Let the doctrines of Mr. Owen be cautiously regarded, especially by that class on whom he proposes to try his experiments. His metaphysical doctrines at once propose to destroy what the good and the wise have in all ages laboured to preserve; and surely his benevolence or reason may be suspected, who declares that he will not effect the social amelioration proposed unless we consent that he should unite with it the deadly alloy of atheism and religion destroyed.

POETRY.

SIN NO MORE.

O Thou whose power the human will can guide
 Whene'er thy children in that power confide,
 Whose mercy o'er a universe extends,
 And calls thy weak and erring creatures Friends,
 Our supplication hear, while we implore
 Imparted energy to sin no more!
 Through the brief span of recollected years,
 A record of our frequent ill appears:
 Evil committed, resolutions made,
 And, by its own deceit, the heart betray'd!
 How oft has folly palliated crime,
 And reformation waited coming time;
 How oft rebellion, spurning wisdom still,
 Has triumph'd o'er the weak but purer will!
 But still in Thee, the universal Friend,
 Life's fervours glow, and with compassion blend;
 Still dost Thou human sinfulness deplore.
 And, mildly chiding, bid us sin no more.
 Could Mercy o'er a sweeter form assume,
 Or gentler light an upward path illumine!
 Still are we spar'd salvation's hour to see,
 And still encourag'd, still implor'd by Thee!
 O Thou, who, when sojourning in our sphere,
 Shed o'er Jerusalem's guilt compassion's tear,

Whose voice controul'd the elemental strife,
 Or bid the dead arise to second life;
 O renovate our hearts, our sins explore,
 And give us strength to go and sin no more!

P.

REPERTORY OF FACTS, *Observations, and Intelligence.*

SUPERIORITY OF RELIGION.

I ENVY no quality of the mind or intellect in others, be it genius, power, evil, or fancy, but if I could choose what would be most delightful, and I believe most useful to me, I should prefer a firm religious belief to every other blessing, for it makes life a discipline of goodness; creates new hopes, when all earthly hopes vanish; and throws over the decay—the destruction of existence, the most gorgeous of all lights, awakens life, even in death, and from corruption and decay calls up life and divinity; makes an instrument of torture and of shame a ladder of ascent to paradise; and, far above all combinations of earthly hopes, calls up the most delightful visions of palms and amaranths, the gardens of the blest, the security of everlasting joys, where the sensualist and the sceptic view only gloom, decay, annihilation, and despair, Sir H. Davy.

SOURCE OF CRIME.

IF we examine the source of crimes, we shall perceive that the chief temptation to violate the principle of justice and humanity, arises from a discontent with the allotments of Providence; men are apt to attach an importance to what they see another possess. But what can be so sovereign a cure for this discontent as religion, which teaches that all things are under the disposal of Infinite Wisdom; that life is but a passage to an eternal condition of being; that every thing the world admires is passing away, and that he only who "doeth the will of God abideth for ever?"—R. Hill.

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